GALLERY 26

SOME CONTEMPORARY BRITISH ART

It used to be that British art was dismissed rather lightly in some quarters, often with a smug remark that the last important British artists were Constable and Turner. Paris dominated western art during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and most promising young British artists ended up on the continent.

After World War II New York assumed greater importance in the art world until it finally challenged Paris for leadership. At the very least a Paris-New York axis replaced Paris as a central pole around which the world of contemporary art revolved.

Only gradually did it become obvious that there was a great deal of activity which was producing some very interesting art on the island off the west coast of Europe. Ben Nicholson and Henry Moore were the names most often heard and they are names that must have a prominent place in any history of modern art. But soon other names began to join these two in exhibitions, books and articles: Graham Sutherland, Alan Davie, Barbara Hepworth, Kenneth Armitage, Reg Butler, Lynn Chadwick, Peter Lanyon, Patrick Heron, Ceri Richards, William Scott, Terry Frost, Francis Bacon, and many others.

Of course, most of the works by these artists belong to an international, rather than a national, tradition. But still there seems to be something that distinguishes them from the art of other regions. It is hard to determine what this is and particularly hard to define it. It may have something to do with a greater interest in literary content, and sometimes it seems that the forms are "harder" and more precise than those of the American "Abstract-Expressionists." At the same time there seems to be less concern for sensuous, decorative qualities than there is by French artists such as Manessier, Bazaine, and Soulages. This is not the case with all the works by all the artists of course, but in a general way it seems to hold true.

This exhibition is intended to provide a view (however limited) of contemporary British art – to "present its face" to Cleveland. Not all the important names are included by any means – but many are. Sculpture suffers perhaps even more than painting in an exhibition so limited in size, for the very big works by Henry Moore, for example, simply cannot be fitted into the available space. Nevertheless, it is probably inclusive enough to give a fair idea of the important work that is being done these days by British artists.

KENNETH ARMITAGE

"Figure Lying on its Side"
Bronze 1957

"Seated Woman with Square Head"
Bronze 1955–57

Lent by Paul Rosenberg & Co., New York

ALAN DAVIE

"Reach for Joy No. 2"
Oil on canvas 1960

"Entrance for a Red Temple"
Oil on canvas 1960

Lent by Martha Jackson Gallery, New York

TERRY FROST

"Linen Blue & Yellow"
Oil 1962

"Lemon, Khaki & White"
Oil 1960

Lent by Bertha Schaefer Gallery, New York

PATRICK HERON

"Red Painting with Emerald Disc"
Oil 1961

"Alizarine Painting (Orange & Blue)"
Oil 1961

Lent by Bertha Schaefer Gallery, New York

PETER LANYON

"Dry Wind"
Oil on board 1958

"Witness"
Oil on canvas 1961

Lent by Catherine Viviano Gallery, New York

HENRY MOORE

"Three Motives Against Wall II"
Bronze 1959

"Reclining Figure with Pedestal"
Bronze 1960

Lent by M. Knoedler & Co., Inc., New York

BEN NICHOLSON

"Painting 1938, Version I"
Oil

"December 1960 (Verzaska, Autumn)"
Oil

Lent by André Emmerich Gallery Inc., New York

WILLIAM SCOTT

"Nile Valley: Morning"
Oil on canvas 1962

"Shapes and Shadows"
Oil on canvas 1962

Lent by Martha Jackson Gallery, New York

GRAHAM SUTHERLAND

"The Lamp"
Oil on canvas 1958

"Night Bird"
Oil on canvas 1958

Lent by Paul Rosenberg & Co., New York

All the paintings and sculptures in this exhibition are for sale. For further information please inquire at the Information Desk or call Extension 331.